

## **TEAC: The Other 15% Conference Call**

### **Minutes – 6/7/2010**

*In attendance:*

Jimmy Bailey  
Pam East  
Mike Edwards  
Sen. Delores Gresham  
Tomeka Hart  
Kenny Lou Heaton  
Jill Levine  
Dr. Gary Nixon  
Dr. Jesse Register  
Dr. Tim Webb

Katie Cour facilitates.

TEAC committee members and others identify themselves as present.

#### **Today's topic 15%:**

Regulations: Must be developed by the TEAC and must be agreed upon by educator and evaluator.

#### **Big Question of the Day: State-mandated menu of options or local flexible menu of options?**

Both are menus and both require more than one option to be given on the menu, but the difference is whether we want them to be comparable across all districts or let the districts have some flexibility in determining the menu.

#### **Option 1: State-Mandated Menu of Options**

Examples: ACT, TCAP

Pros- Comparability, Practicality, Quality Control

Cons- Constricting

#### **Option 2: Local Flexible Menu of Options**

Examples: Curriculum-based assessments

- Would have to submit to and be approved by the state
- **Q: Mr. Edwards:** Can you give an example of criteria for this?
- **A: Katie-** Districts choose one menu option from state recommended menu, and different districts can choose different options. For example one district could choose TCAP proficiency rates and another could choose high school graduation rates.

Pros- Flexibility, Buy-In

Cons- Quality Control, Lack of Comparable Measures, Training

**Katie:** So these are the two options. Do we want the state to prescribe a menu of options or do we want the state to allow districts to have a more flexible option, with less state control?

**Katie:** Next, we need to determine what *acceptable sources* for menu options are. Besides proficiency, non-academic outcomes can be used as well, such as graduation rate, etc.

**Option 1: Measures of student proficiency**

- Percent proficient on state assessments (TCAP)
- School-wide value-added scores
- Classroom artifacts

**Option 2: Non-academic outcomes**

- Graduation rate
- Student attendance or retention rates
- College attendance and persistence
- Discipline referrals

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**Committee Member Input**

1. Should the TEAC mandate specific measures for the menu, or should the state allow districts to use their own measures as one menu option?
2. Should the TEAC include student proficiency measures, non-academic measures, surveys or a combination when determine the other 15%?

**Dr. Nixon-** I would caution a little bit on the discipline referrals. If a teacher knows they are being evaluated on this, they may stop referring students and this can be a disincentive.

**Mr. Bailey-** If I can offer a solution to this after speaking with the principals last Saturday. They would (basically) measure the change/decline rather than the overall number of dismissals, expulsions, etc. We had a great summit on Saturday. They talked about standards for leadership (the 21 standards) and portfolios. Principals talked about collecting data and creating these portfolios. I did some research Interstate School Leadership Standards and how they can be incorporated. Two places already use these, one being Charlotte-Mecklenburg. They look at promotion rates, reading/language arts and what % meet the state standards, mathematics, graduation rates, attendance for both students and teachers. They also look at the areas of parent involvement

**Q- Katie-** Do you have any thoughts on question 1?

**A- Jimmy-** I kept hearing Saturday that if we did a menu of these state items (digitally) and then have a pull-down for districts to choose from, that would be the better option.

**Ms. Levine:** I keep going back to the idea we need to keep this simple. With all the different options and different teachers, it becomes very complicated and we must be careful. I'd be in

favor of having specific measures recommended by the state for the 35% but for the 15% have a menu of options, but a set menu of 10-15 options, and a district would be able to choose from (like a drop-down menu digitally).

**Q-Katie-** Would this be a district-created assessment or something the state already uses.

**A-Jill-** I think the district should be allowed to create their own, but we would have to decide who reviews/approves this at the state level.

**Ms. Hart:** For some reason, this call seemed much more confusing. You have to have options according to the law, but I think there has to be some combination of both. If it's all flexible, you're back to "What's the standard?" If it's too flexible, we'll have the same issue we have now at the state. Are different districts doing the same thing and are they equitable? I don't know what that combination looks like. I do like having the drop-down and appreciate the districts having some flexibility but I don't know what that looks like. On the 15%, I feel that I'll know more once we know exactly what the 35% looks like. If the 35% is completely proficiency measures, then the 15% could be something other. For example, if I'm a high school teacher and I'm being evaluated on high school graduation rates, let's say I'm a new teacher and I've only taught one year...Am I being held accountable for the last few years. If we're going to measure things like graduation rates we are going to have to change the way we deliver our services. I think the 15% should be both proficiency measures and other, but it does depend some on the 35%. The state should be setting the minimum standard for this. There's a place for both student proficiency and other options and could help drive/push reforms. We do need room for flexibility as long as the choices are clear-cut.

**Dr. Nixon-** I support LEAs having local flexibility and options. I've been hearing about the state professional organizations evaluating teachers and helping develop options for their category, but I haven't seen anything on that today. I do have questions about promotion rate and graduation rate. If 8<sup>th</sup> graders are at a certain proficiency level, it is worrisome to be promoting them without warrant. This could be a disincentive. I do support district flexibility and a menu of options. LEAs could create their own options and have them approved.

**Dr. Register-** I'll just make a couple of observations. I think I'm for flexibility, some choice, but for the 15% I'm for TEAC identifying a menu of options for the district to choose from rather than allowing the options to be wide-open.

**Katie-** Should districts be allowed to create own assessments?

**Register-** I haven't decided. I think I could go with district end-of-course tests, I could go that far.

**Katie-** What are your thoughts on proficiency measures?

**Register-** I think some amount of assessment measures are important. I think graduation rates are important. The fact that we haven't been able to get consistent measures is a problem, but we that is important. There should also be some non-assessment measures as well.

**Mr. Edwards-** I think the 35% value-added, TVAAS or something else, will be how the student the moves the ball forward and how the teacher enables them to do that. The 50% will be something to discuss later. The 15% is the one area that we're going to be able to be measure student attainment- knowledge and skills. If we're taking fourth grade assessments at the end of the year, this is the one area we can see if the student attained everything they learned at the end

of the year. I think the option number 2, if there are problems with quality control, that option should be eliminated immediately. We must have options that guarantee we have quality control. When I hear about the state assessments, those seem like the most logical place to measure in a lot of the courses, especially if the Tennessee Diploma Project aligns these end of course exams and high quality standards. I agree with Dr. Nixon on advancing without qualification is a problem (graduation measures, etc.). My problem with this is I don't know where to apply it. Maybe for principal evaluations, but you must be sure you are graduating people with the skills and knowledge. But, how is that applied to a specific teacher evaluation? Like a 9<sup>th</sup> grade teacher?

**Dr. Register-** I agree about promotion rates and agree with Dr. Nixon, but graduation rates are different.

**Katie-** To graduation rates and how it affects 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers- It could promote collaboration and school-wide investment.

**Mr. Edwards-** At what point do we really use this evaluation to hone in on a student's mastery of this subject. Somewhere we need to figure this.

**Dr. Webb-** I think the 15% should be based on other measures of student academic achievement other than growth. I think the graduation rate should be calculated, but for principals not teachers.

**Katie-** Local menu of options?

**Dr. Webb-** Yes, and approved at the state level.

**Katie-** Graduation rates for other educators?

**Dr. Webb-** No, and I just believe the 15%, as it is intended, should be other achievement measures.

**Katie-** Assessment-based you mean?

**Dr. Webb-** Yes

**Ms. East-** I agree with the others on the specific drop down menu. There are many pros and not many cons. It gives the teachers, principals, districts much needed flexibility. LEAs and districts need the flexibility because all are different and have different needs. But we also have quality control across the state. The menu needs to be specific and clear and also have assessments that are super valid and reliable. The non-assessment outcomes are worthy of measuring, such as graduation rate, but we must be very careful. I think that with a menu of options, we have more site-based decisions, which we really need. It also leads to more ownership for teachers, which we need as well. I don't think districts need to be going off to do their own thing.

**Sen. Gresham-** I am with Dr. Nixon on supporting some flexibility in the LEAs. The drop-down menu is a great idea, but what we have on that menu must be specific, clear and comparable. The conversation earlier on graduation rates, promotion, etc., I think is right on. For non-assessment measures, we must be considerate of these anecdotal stories. What I haven't heard anything about is peer ratings. Is there any discussion around that? What I have found often with teachers is that they look often for opportunities for collaboration, and they often know which other teachers need the most help, so I didn't know if we had discussed having peer evaluators. Whatever we choose must be simple, relevant, and respected by the folks being evaluated. I did

have some feedback on the summit from a West TN teacher and she found it challenging and mentioned something about portfolios. Even for principals, we must be careful with portfolios.

**Ms. Heaton-** From the perspective of a classroom teacher, I tend to lean toward assessment based rather than assessment based. I am fearful that the attitudes will be like another game to play and figure it out and then win. I believe it should be a specific drop down menu. I believe it should have some flexibility. I lean towards assessment based, academic measures rather than the non-academic measures.

**Edwards-** Tennessee teachers are great. Put them up against anyone in the country, and they'll come out on top. The assessment thing is systemic....

**Heaton-** I appreciate you saying that. I have all the hope in the world that we do have a great decision....

**Katie-** I think this was a great first conversation. I appreciate all the thoughts and comments. In terms of next steps, we are going to summarize some of your thoughts and consider the questions you posed today so we can have a great conversation this Thursday.